



Alberta Environment & Parks Regulatory Transformation Project

Fact Sheet

Purpose

Alberta Environment and Parks (AEP) is undergoing a transformation of its environment regulatory system to reduce red tape, streamline application processing and address backlogs through the Regulatory Transformation Project. Once implemented, industry can expect transparent and consistent application approval timelines while still holding a high standard to safeguard Alberta's air, land, water, and biodiversity.

Overview

- AEP is working to create a more effective outcome based regulatory assurance system to drive better environmental resource management and provide transparency and consistency to all applications.
- The new regulatory framework will process various applications under the same integrated system including, *Water Act* licensing and approvals, Sand & Gravel approvals, *Public Lands Act* approvals, Grazing Dispositions, and *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* approvals.
- The framework provides:
 - Clear accountability throughout the lifecycle of an activity.
 - A comprehensive, effective regulatory system that achieves better results and is nimble in making adjustments.
 - An integrated approval process with the ability to apply for multiple activities under the same project.
 - A common risk management framework allowing for approval of low-risk activities upon submission so AEP staff can focus on regulating higher risk activities.
 - Enhance stakeholder awareness by providing all AEP regulatory requirements up front prior to applications to reduce supplemental information requests.
 - A sustainable program that reduces backlogs and allows low risk files to be analyzed at a regular frequency.
 - Continuous business innovation.
- AEP is looking to increase public trust with expectations in becoming a consistent and reliable regulator with staff spending less time on application processes and more time assessing active operations.
- The automated system will detect if there are any missing components in the initial application with the goal of approving 80% of applications upon submission.

- Applications deemed 'high risk' that involve complex environmental or stakeholder/ indigenous requirements may require referral to AEP staff for further assessment. This is expected to account for 20% of applications.
- AEP staff continue to address existing backlogs and have currently reduced Sand & Gravel backlogs by 83%, *Environmental Protection and Enhancement Act* backlogs by 76% and *Water Act* backlogs by 71%.
- The Regulatory Transformation Project's approach is holistic instead of trying to speed up or change individual steps. This innovation increases governments accountability in providing quicker timelines which previously took 12-24 months for reviews and decisions.
- Adding predictability to the approval process will reduce financing charges which impacted the viability of projects and increase investor confidence, reduce costs, and encourage further sustainable development.

Next Steps

- Initial modules including *Water Act* licenses and Sand & Gravel approvals will launch in Q3 2021. Modules for drinking water, industrial activities, *Public Lands Act*, and grazing leases/renewals/transfer are expected to be implemented in 2022. AEP expects to have a fully transformed environmental regulatory system by 2023.
- AEP remains fully committed in reducing red tape and engaging with industry in identifying opportunities for further education and discussion. BILD Alberta will continue to collaborate with AEP staff and communicate updates as they become available.